

## **China**

### **Facts and Statistics**

**Location:** Eastern Asia bordering Afghanistan 76 km, Bhutan 470 km, Burma 2,185 km, India 3,380 km, Kazakhstan 1,533 km, North Korea 1,416 km, Kyrgyzstan 858 km, Laos 423 km, Mongolia 4,677 km, Nepal 1,236 km, Pakistan 523 km, Russia (northeast) 3,605 km, Russia (northwest) 40 km, Tajikistan 414 km, Vietnam 1,281 km

**Capital:** Beijing

**Climate:** extremely diverse; tropical in south to subarctic in north

**Population:** 1,298,847,624 (July 2004 est.)

**Ethnic Make-up:** Han Chinese 91.9%, Zhuang, Uygur, Hui, Yi, Tibetan, Miao, Manchu, Mongol, Buyi, Korean, and other nationalities 8.1%

**Religions:** Daoist (Taoist), Buddhist, Muslim 1%-2%, Christian 3%-4%

**Government:** Communist state

### **The Chinese Language**

Chinese is a family of closely-related but mutually unintelligible languages. These languages are known variously as f"ingy" ¢n (regional languages), dialects of Chinese or varieties of Chinese. In all over 1.2 billion people speak one or more varieties of Chinese.

All varieties of Chinese belong to the Sino-Tibetan family of languages and each one has its own dialects and sub-dialects, which are more or less mutually intelligible.

Why not learn some useful Mandarin or Cantonese phrases before your visit?

### **Chinese Society & Culture**

#### **The Importance of "Face"**

- . The concept of 'face' roughly translates as 'honor', 'good reputation' or 'respect'.
- . There are four types of 'face':
  - 1) *Diu-mian-zi*: this is when one's actions or deeds have been exposed to people.
  - 2) *Gei-mian-zi*: involves the giving of face to others through showing respect.
  - 3) *Liu-mian-zi*: this is developed by avoiding mistakes and showing wisdom in action.
  - 4) *Jiang-mian-zi*: this is when face is increased through others, i.e. someone complementing you to an associate.
- . It is critical you avoid losing face or causing the loss of face at all times.

#### **Confucianism**

Confucianism is a system of behaviours and ethics that stress the obligations of people towards one another based upon their relationship. The basic tenets are based upon five different relationships:

- . Ruler and subject
- . Husband and wife
- . Parents and children

- . Brothers and sisters
- . Friend and friend

Confucianism stresses duty, sincerity, loyalty, honor, filial piety, respect for age and seniority. Through maintaining harmonious relations as individuals, society itself becomes stable.

### **Collectivism vs. Individualism**

- . In general, the Chinese are a collective society with a need for group affiliation, whether to their family, school, work group, or country.
- . In order to maintain a sense of harmony, they will act with decorum at all times and will not do anything to cause someone else public embarrassment.
- . They are willing to subjugate their own feelings for the good of the group.
- . This is often observed by the use of silence in very structured meetings. If someone disagrees with what another person says, rather than disagree publicly, the person will remain quiet. This gives face to the other person, while speaking up would make both parties lose face.

### **Non-Verbal Communication**

- . The Chinese' Non-verbal communication speaks volumes.
- . Since the Chinese strive for harmony and are group dependent, they rely on facial expression, tone of voice and posture to tell them what someone feels.
- . Frowning while someone is speaking is interpreted as a sign of disagreement. Therefore, most Chinese maintain an impassive expression when speaking.
- . It is considered disrespectful to stare into another person's eyes. In crowded situations the Chinese avoid eye contact to give themselves privacy.